

Message Text

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TAGS: OEXC, SOPN, UR, US
SUBJECTS: SOVIET CENSORSHIP OF "PHOTOGRAPHY USA"

REF: (A) MOSCOW 12133, (B) USIA 22833

1. ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TASS WIRE AUGUST 24 CARRIES PIECE BY BORIS CHEKHONIN REACTING TO U.S. PRESS INTERVIEWS WITH "PHOTOGRAPHY-USA" EXHIBIT GSO PHILIPPE DUCHATEAU (REF B).

2. CHEKHONIN, WHO ATTENDED AUGUST 16 PRESS PREVIEW AT EXHIBIT AND REWORKED POST-SUPPLIED INTERVIEW WITH EXHIBIT DIRECTOR URSINO INTO TASS ITEM RUN ON THAT SAME DATE, DEPARTS FROM NORMAL TASS HATCHET JOBS

BY SPENDING HIS FIRST TWO PARAGRAPHS PRAISING EXHIBIT ("A SUCCESS FROM THE VERY START...THIS IS NATURAL FOR OVER 400 PHOTOGRAPHS DISPLAY-ED THERE

SHOW THE CUSTOMS AND WORK OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WITH WHOM THE SOVIET PEOPLE WISH TO LIVE IN PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP") AND CITING POSITIVE UTTERANCES OF DIRECTOR URSINO ("FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING,"..."A GOOD CONTRIBUTION TO A GOOD CAUSE").

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3. PRESUMABLY HAVING DISPLAYED HIS GOOD INTENTIONS, CHEKHONIN THEN SHIFTS OVER TO HIS MAIN PURPOSE -- COUNTERING DUCHATEAU'S COMMENTS ABOUT SOVIET CENSORSHIP. UNFORTUNATELY FOR CHEKHONIN, HE PRETTY MUCH DESTROYS HIS OWN CASE BY FIRST ADMITTING THAT "INDEED, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE U.S. (EXHIBIT) ADMINISTRATION WERE RECOMMENDED NOT TO DISPLAY IN THE LIBRARY AND NOT TO CIRCULATE 16 BOOKS AND NINE MAGAZINES FROM THE TOTAL NUMBER OF

350 BOOK TITLES BROUGHT FOR THE EXHIBITION, AND THEY AGREED TO THIS." HAVING ADMITTED CENSORSHIP, CHEKHONIN (WHO HAS OBVIOUSLY DONE HIS HOMEWORK) REFERS TO SEVERAL REJECTED BOOKS BY NAME AND DETAILS THEIR VIOLATIONS OF SOVIET MORAL OR POLITICAL DOGMA.

4. CHEKHONIN WINDS UP BY STATING THAT "IT IS CLEAR TO ALL FOR WHAT KIND OF CULTURAL EXCHANGE PHILIP (SIC) DUCHATEAU PINS, FORGETTING THAT HE IS STAYING IN A COUNTRY WHOSE LAWS AND HOSPITALITY HE SHOULD RESPECT. SUCH ARE FACTS AND THEY CANNOT BE DENIED EVEN IF SOMEBODY WISHES TO PERFORM AN ANTI-SOVIET ROLE THAT IS NOW FASHIONABLE AMONG CERTAIN CIRCLES IN THE WEST."

5. COMMENT: WE HAD BEEN XPECTING A RESPONSE IN THE SOVIET MEDIA TO THE PUBLICITY GENERATED IN THE U.S. BY DUCHATEAU'S COMMENTS. ON THE WHOLE, CHEKHONIN'S PIECE LOOKS LIKE A CAREFUL ATTEMPT TO STRIKE BACK AT DUCHATEAU WITHOUT IDENTIFYING HIS VIEWS WITH THOSE OF THE EXHIBIT ADMINISTRATION, THE EMBASSY OR THE USG. BY SOVIET STANDARDS, THIS IS A JOB DONE WITH A SCALPEL RATHER THAN A BLUDGEON. THE FACT THAT CHEKHONIN CONFINES HIS CRITICAL REMARKS TO DUCHATEAU PERSONALLY AND EVEN TOSSES IN GOOD WORDS FOR THE EXHIBIT AND FOR DIRECTOR URSINO IS A SIGN THAT THE SOVIETS DO NOT WANT TO MAKE MORE OF THIS EPISODE THAN IS NECESSARY. ONE IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE MATTER, HOWEVER, IS THAT CHEKHONIN OBVIOUSLY GOT MOST OF HIS INFORMATION ON SPECIFIC BOOKS FROM THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (POSSIBLY DIRECTLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FROM CENSOR BARTSHEVICH), FROM WHICH ORGANIZATION THE EMBASSY AND FRANK URSINO HAVE THUS FAR HEARD NOT A WORD. TOON

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